27.—PRINCIPLES OF THE DIVINE GOVERNANCE.

I. Although God has supreme power and direct authority over all creatures, yet He makes use of *secondary causes* or subordinate authorities to work out His natural and His spiritual decrees. A being is more admirable when its goodness is diffusive than when its goodness is in itself and for itself only. God completes the likeness to Himself which is in creatures, by making them channels and agents of the bounty which proceeds in the first instance from Himself. Thus the sun is the means of communicating heat, energy, motion, to this earth. Parents are the intermediaries by whom God gives life to new beings, and furnishes them with their daily bread. In like manner, Jesus Christ, as man, has all things committed to Him by the Father, and is the first agent and supreme mediator. But all creatures have functions of utility towards others. The angels are the ministers of God. Men are apostles, teachers, intercessors, mediums of divine grace. The Blessed Virgin has, beyond all others, the office of intercessor for all mankind, and channel of grace from her Divine Son. Parents and civil authorities rule in the name of God, and declare His will in the natural, political or domestic sphere. They should remember that they are His agents and act accordingly. You too have to act on God's behalf for the natural or spiritual welfare of others, as His agent, mediator, or temporal providence. Endeavour to make yourself an adequate representative of Him, and act in His spirit and for His ends.

II. Another principle of God's governing action is the harmony of mercy and justice, and the predominance of mercy over all His works. God's dealings with the angelic

world are all full of mercy and love, in creating them in endowing them with grace and glory and happiness, and with virtue and strength to persevere if so they wished. So too it is with man. God anticipates him with the abundance of His mercies. He placed Adam in Paradise, gave him the means of working out his salvation without difficulty in the midst of delights, without having even to pass through the gates of death. Mercy being rejected by man, justice and severity appeared. But how merciful was this severity! The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity took on Himself to make atonement and bear the punishment, that we might escape almost free from our own deeds. It is only after the obstinate rejection individually of this crowning mercy that God abandons men to the consequence of their sins. How happy you are to be under the rule of such a Lord!

III. Although the will of God is all-powerful, and although events happen according to His decrees, yet His will harmonizes with the nature given to creatures by the same divine will. His agents and secondary causes influence others in accordance with the law of their nature. So God rules all things, but not in an arbitrary or irregular manner Some beings are so governed that they act constantly and uniformly as if by necessity; others, free beings, are so ruled by grace and by prayer, by angels or men, that they retain full freedom of action. The results depend fully on themselves as well as fully on God. Remember ever to depend on God and to depend on yourself. You cannot succeed without Him; and at the same time, you must not leave all to Him as if He acted alone without you. There is a certain work of God to be done in the world which requires your virtue and energy for its success; and without you it will not be done. Do not say: God is omnipotent, my efforts are of no avail, He can do it without me. He is indeed the source of all good, but you are the natural agent by whom it is to be accomplished, and you are responsible for it.